

Minutes of a committee meeting held in New York City on April 30, 1917, on plans and designs for the Potomac Park Field House and adjacent structures.

At the January meeting of the Commission, the architect members were designated a committee to pass upon progress plans and designs for the proposed Field House and adjacent structures designed in the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds for the East Potomac Park playground project. Plans and designs in preliminary stages had again been before the meeting on April 20th last, when various desired modifications had been suggested. (See minutes of that meeting.) In accordance with these suggestions, further studies had been developed. In view of the nearness of the end of the fiscal year and the necessity for getting out approved specifications for the constructions of the wings within the short time available, the Officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds submitted several schemes to the committee in New York on April 30, 1917, for a definite decision as to architectural elevations and locations.

The meeting was held in Mr. Platt's office at 2 o'clock on that date, Mr. Hastings, Mr. Kendall and Mr. Moore being present on behalf of the Commission, (Mr. Platt was prevented from appearing by illness), and Mr. Cammerer representing the Secretary. For the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, Mr. J. G. Langdon, landscape architect and designer of the approved park development project, and Mr. Horace Peaslee, landscape architect and designer of the field house and other adjacent structures of this project, were present.

In commenting upon the design for the buildings submitted, and upon their location and grouping as indicated on a tracing (P. B. & G. No. 333.27), brought along to show the general layout of the composition, Mr. Langdon protested that



the style of architecture for the field house was the exposition type and not in harmony with his idea of what was suitable for the development of that park, - that the whole park should be simple, and without formality of any kind. He conceded that it would be the ideal thing to get some fixed relation between the various structures if one felt certain of the basin, the roads, and the other attractions that might go in there, but that it was premature now to place them. He added that, now that the character of the field house was changed, it would be necessary to redesign the whole composition, and considered it unwise at this time to locate and design the four subordinate houses of the group, since they need not have relation to each other and to the main field house; that the whole composition was so hastily gotten up in the first place that it needed considerable further study as a whole. He also pointed out the necessity for increasing the sizes of the porches, stating that a main porch of 30-foot width should be insisted on to accommodate the crowds.

Mr. Hastings and Mr. Kendall did not agree that the architecture was the exposition type, but considered it simple and neat and well adapted for that park. To Mr. Langdon's objection that the architect should confine himself to the details of the main structure and not branch out into the treatment of its immediate surroundings, they replied that an architect would refuse to design a house if he could not have immediate control of the surroundings; they considered the immediate surrounding of the main structure, the relation of the various buildings to each other and to the basin and to the roads, all simply and purely an architectural problem. They considered it inconceivable that buildings so near together should not have some relation, - that the proposed locations were very good, and offered great possibilities of development. They did not agree that everything had to be redesigned, but liked the plan for the locations of the buildings and the general





ensemble very much indeed. They thought the architectural elevations contained a great deal of charm, and had gradually grown better. Although the plan of the composition (333.27) was not submitted, and only presented for the information of the members, the committee considered the locations and elevations of the structures satisfactory, and that the plan could be taken as the key for the preliminary work, subject to the working out of the details later on; it was therefore approved as a preliminary plan. They recognized the need of enlarging the porches, and felt that a width of 23 feet between columns for the main porch would be about right. At Mr. Langdon's suggestion that 30 feet would be better, it was thought that such a width might knock the architectural scheme, but they decided to have it tried out in further studies. Mr. Peaslee stated that there was no hurry about this detail of the central structure since the pressure of time only related to the wings. A width of 15 feet for the end porches was considered about right.

The location of the bridge shown in the composition was thought about right, but it was recommended that it should be a one-arch structure.

Elimination of the basement lockers was recommended; the idea of underground lockers did not appeal to the committee, and they would rather have a separate locker building elsewhere, if necessary.

Regarding the treatment of the central part of the field house, Mr. Hastings preferred plan B, but Mr. Kendall favored scheme A. Mr. Moore stated that Mr. Platt was in favor of the treatment shown in scheme A, and plans of development should therefore go along the lines of A. Mr. Peaslee said that immediate decision was not necessary and the central portion would be submitted again at the next meeting. With relation to the patio, the committee suggested the use of gravel rather than grass. The treatment of the small squares next to the reflect-



ory fixed by Mr. Peaslee for table service was not liked, and it was suggested that they be left open. They liked the deep wings on the front, since they gave a better silhouette and proportions. Suggestions for revising the roof slightly were pointed out to Mr. Peaslee, and the use of green, specially selected Spanish tile, was considered satisfactory.

A number of other desirable modifications and changes in details were noted by Mr. Peaslee on the elevations themselves.

Approved:

  
Chairman.

  
Colonel, U. S. Army.

P. B. & G. plans referred to were:

General layout plan, open court, - 333.40a.

General layout plan, interior arcade, - 333.40b.

Ground plan, women's wing, - - - - 333.44a.

Ground plan, men's wing, - - - 333.43a.

General elevations:

Schemes 333.52-a-b-c-d-e-f.

Grouping and grading plan, 333.27.

Landscape plan, - - - 333.26.

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